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26 January 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT : COMIREX Review of Imagery Reconnaissance  
Requirements for the Fiscal Year 1971  
National Reconnaissance Program

REFERENCES : a. USIB-D-46.4/12, 1 March 1968  
b. USIB-D-46.4/31 (COMIREX-D-13.16/6)  
7 August 1969  
c. USIB-D-46.4/27 (COMIREX-D-13.16/3)  
4 February 1969  
d. USIB-D-46.4/32 (COMIREX-D-15.2/14)  
10 November 1969  
e. USIB-D-46.4/30 (COMIREX-D-13.7/6)  
16 July 1969 and Memo to Holders,  
29 July 1969  
f. COMIREX-D-13.16/5, 11 June 1969

1. In accordance with USIB instructions (reference a), COMIREX has reviewed standing USIB requirements for imagery reconnaissance by satellites and has made a comparison of these with information available to it on the FY 71 launch schedule.

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The COMIREX review is needed as guidance to the NRO in its preparation of the detailed financial program for FY 71. The imagery reconnaissance requirements for search, general surveillance, and high-resolution technical intelligence coverage are reviewed in the paragraphs below as well as the use of the search and surveillance systems in support of mapping, charting, and geodetic accuracy requirements. Standing USIB requirements for photographic reconnaissance of special regions, such as Southeast Asia, North Korea, or Cuba which involve consideration of airborne reconnaissance as well as satellite, are under review at the present time and recommendations for their modification as appropriate will be submitted to USIB during the next several months.

2. Intelligence needs are reviewed in detail prior to every satellite reconnaissance mission and detailed provided the NRO which augments that contained in standing requirements. During the past year about 25 percent of CORONA collection was in response to such mission directed requirements and a similar percentage applies to  collection. Because of the dynamic nature of many intelligence problems the NRO should anticipate

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that it will receive continuing mission-by-mission guidance at about previous levels during FY 71 to assure the highest possible level of responsiveness to intelligence needs.

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KH-4 (CORONA)

6. COMIREX will shortly propose that the "built-up" and "undeveloped" areas of the Communist countries as delineated

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25X1 in the [ ] amplification (reference d) be utilized by the NRO  
as the basis for collection against the CORONA "six-month"  
and "12-month" search requirements. While the net result of  
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previously defined as "built-up" and increase by 90 percent the  
area defined as "undeveloped", the difficulty of satisfying the  
modified requirement is not necessarily directly proportional.

7. The present CORONA launch schedule is extremely  
marginal with respect to satisfaction of the search requirement  
and it is particularly vulnerable to any mission failure such as  
occurred on Mission 1050 in April 1969. During the second half  
of 1969 the level of satisfaction of the built-up area search  
requirement fell below 50 percent for a brief period. This was  
the lowest level of accomplishment in several years. Expressed  
in another way, the low level of coverage meant that more than  
50 percent of the built-up search area had not been photographed  
during the preceding six-month period. Such a level of coverage  
is clearly unacceptable over an extended period.

[REDACTED]

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8. It is anticipated that COMIREX will continue to provide guidance prior to each mission which will assist the NRO in collecting both against standing requirements and current intelligence needs. As previously noted, on the average about 25 percent of the film on CORONA missions during 1969 was allocated against such directed search areas as ICBM complexes, the Sino-Soviet border, the Middle East, and so forth. While collection against these directed areas also satisfies some portion of standing search requirements, they also at times compete with the standing requirements. The NRO should anticipate directed requirements during FY 71 at about the same level as during CY 69. Continued use of some portion of the CORONA film for mapping, charting, and geodesy purposes also should be anticipated using experience during 1969 as a basis for projection. It is recognized that the initial timing and performance of [REDACTED] will have a major effect on the satisfaction of USIB search and surveillance requirements. If [REDACTED] CORONA proceed successfully on present schedules, a very high level of coverage should result and it may be possible to forego or reduce launches of the later CORONAs.

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Color Requirements

12. The NRO has made available a new color film, SO-242, which affords color photography with ~~little~~ *some resolution* or no resolution degradation compared with standard black and white, SO-3404. A limited amount of SO-242 was used on

*some*  
[redacted] KH-4 Mission 1108. It is

*some*  
anticipated COMIREX has under way a comprehensive evaluation of the color photography acquired to date. (A data base on color photography is being developed and community-wide evaluation and review of potential requirements for color photography are being coordinated by COMIREX.) The NRO, in parallel, has under study the technical and processing aspects of the new film. The over-all value and utility of color photography of the quality of SO-242 has not yet been evaluated in relation to its cost or in relation to other operational or exploitation factors. It is not anticipated that a comprehensive review which would be the basis for formulation of national requirements for color, if any, can be completed before the second half of FY 71. The NRO however should take into account in its planning at least a limited increase

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in the acquisition, processing, and exploitation of color film during FY 71. It should not make major resource commitments in this area until the USIB has had the opportunity to evaluate color requirements on a comprehensive basis.

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that the Board note this paper and approve its transmittal to the NRO as guidance for FY 71 planning.

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